

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



May 2021

Private Rosamond Johnson, Jr., Annual Celebration

A good number of people turned out to celebrate the life and heroism of Private Rosamond Johnson, the first Escambia County casualty of the Korean War, at the May 1, 2021 event on Johnson Beach. The ceremony began with a stunning rendition of the Star Spangled Banner by Mary Lou Talbot – so powerful and inspiring that many on the beach next to the National Seashore pavilion stopped what they were doing to listen and applaud the performance. It was followed by significant and appropriate comments from several speakers, including Interim Superintendent of Gulf Islands National Seashore Darrel Echols, President/CEO of the Florida Black Chamber of Commerce Eugene Franklin, and Rosamond Johnson’s niece Pam Johnson-Gleen. The event concluded with “taps” and the placement of a flowered wreath at the Rosamond Johnson memorial adjacent to the Pavilion. The event was sponsored by the National Park Service, Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce, and Escambia County. For more on Rosamond Johnson Beach Day, go to <http://business.visitperdido.com/events/details/rosamond-johnson-beach-day-2021-20786?calendarMonth=2021-05-01>.

Johnson Beach Road/Perdido Key Drive Roundabout Public Workshop

The April 29, 2021 public workshop at the Perdido Key Community Center was a considerable success with approximately 30 attendees viewing exhibits and submitting comments on the proposed Johnson Beach Road/Perdido Key Drive intersection roundabout. Entering and exiting Johnson Beach Road in the frequent periods of heavy traffic on Perdido Key Drive can be challenging so the hope is the roundabout will improve traffic safety and flow. Particular emphasis was given to the roundabout interface with the Perdido Key Multi-Use Path now under construction since pedestrians and cyclists may cross Perdido Key Drive at that location to access the Johnson Beach Road path.

Turtle Nesting Season Begins

Turtle nesting season in the Pensacola area is from May 01 until September. The challenge is particularly great this year because many dune crossovers and educational signs were destroyed by Hurricane Sally in September 2021 and still need repair or replacement. This is certainly true at Johnson Beach (Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore) where some dunes were flattened and substantial care is needed to avoid sea turtle and shorebird nesting sites. For more information on sea turtle nesting, go to the Escambia County news article “Sea Turtle Nesting Season Starts May 1, Visitors Can Help Protect Coastal Wildlife” at <https://myescambia.com/news/news-article/2021/04/29/sea-turtle-nesting-season-starts-may-1-visitors-can-help-protect-coastal-wildlife>.

Post-Hurricane Sally Dune Management on Perdido Key

Efforts are underway at various locations on Perdido Key to restore dunes lost or heavily damaged from Hurricane Sally. Piles of sand have been created at the Johnson Beach (Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore) to begin the dune forming process while dunes have been renewed with more sand and sand-retaining vegetation on some beachfront condominiums at the eastern portion of the island.

Protecting the Environment on Perdido Key

Why has Perdido Key not become overdeveloped? One reason is because the Perdido Key beach mouse was listed as an endangered species in 1985 under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1966. Preventing local extinction of the mouse required protecting its habitat with measures like curbing public access to dunes, planting appropriate vegetation, and restricting predators such as domestic cats. Those hoping to build on the island had to fulfill substantial permitting requirements in order for construction to begin – a process that could take years. To improve the process, Escambia County worked with federal agencies to create the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP – approved in 2014) that expedited procedures while still protecting the Perdido Key beach mouse, sea turtles and piping plovers (a small shorebird). According to Tim Day, Escambia County natural resource manager: “The endangered species issues have done a good job helping to maintain the vision of Perdido Key as a village which isn’t overbuilt or a condo canyon.” “The island’s habitat has to be as nice as the condo you’ve just constructed.” All who appreciate the modest development and wonderful animals on Perdido Key should strongly support efforts to retain its natural environment and wildlife. For more on the Perdido Key beach mouse, see the December 13, 2017 US Fish and Wildlife Service document “The Mouse that Roared: On a Florida beach, builders and conservationists join forces to save an endangered species” by Dan Chapman at <https://www.fws.gov/southeast/articles/the-mouse-that-roared/>, also available on the Archive page of the PKA website; the film “Little Beach Mouse from the South” at <https://www.intonaturefilms.org/project/little-beach-mouse-from-the-south/>; and, the Habitat Conservation Plan at <https://myescambia.com/docs/default-source/sharepoint->

[natural-resources-management/perdido-key-habitat-conservation-plan/ada-docs/ada_final-perdido-key-hcp-23nov11.pdf?sfvrsn=db78186d_4](https://www.perdidokey.com/natural-resources-management/perdido-key-habitat-conservation-plan/ada-docs/ada_final-perdido-key-hcp-23nov11.pdf?sfvrsn=db78186d_4).

10-Digit Dialing Required Starting May 22

Beginning May 22, 2021, all calls made in Escambia County and 17 other counties in the Florida Panhandle served by the 850 and newly assigned 448 area codes will need to use 10-digit dialing. For more on this issue, see the April 22, 2021 *Pensacola News Journal/USA Today Network-Florida* article “New 448 area code, mandatory 10-digit dialing coming to Panhandle next month” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2021/04/22/panhandle-roll-out-448-area-code-mandatory-10-digit-dialing-may-22/7338246002/>.

May Calendar

May 01 – Rosamond Johnson Celebration Day at Johnson Beach
May 01-02 – Pensacola Crawfish Festival at Seville Square & Fountain Park
May 01-08 – Various *Cinco de Mayo* events
May 06-09 – Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival at OWA
May 07-08 – Pensacola Ladies Billfish Tournament Santa Rosa Yacht Club
May 07-09 – National Collegiate Beach Volleyball Championship at Gulf Shores
May 07 – Visit Pensacola Visitors Center Open House on Gregory Street
May 09 – Various Mother’s Day events
May 11-16,18-23 – Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoos Stadium in Pensacola
May 14 – Flicks on the Field at Pensacola Greyhound Track
May 15-16 – NW FL Quarter Horse Beach Bash Show 7750 Mobile Highway
May 21-22 – Orange Beach Billfish Classic
May 21-23 – Pensacon at Pensacola Bay Center
May 28-29 – Pensacola Mardi Gras Events in downtown Pensacola
May 28-31 – Various Memorial Day Weekend events

Blue Angels typically practice on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at NAS Pensacola
Bands on the Beach Tuesday evenings at Gulfside Pavilion, Pensacola Beach

The following websites provide additional information about events taking place in our great Gulf Coast region:

<https://www.visitpensacola.com/>
<http://mygulfcoastchamber.com/>
<http://www.visitperdido.com/>
<http://mulletwrapper.net/>
<https://myescambia.com/>
<http://www.emeraldcoastfl.com/>
<http://alabama.travel/festivals-and-events>

Perdido Key Association Board of Directors